

Volunteer



Savannah

A city that serves

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Message from the Mayor



Volunteering to help your community is the epitome of good citizenship. We all live in an interdependent condition where the quality of life depends on individuals, families, neighbors, civic, social and faith-based institutions, businesses, and government working together for the common good. It takes all of the community working together to make what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called “The Beloved Community.” The metaphor of all of us being in the same boat is another way of capturing the idea of collective work and responsibility.

Savannah is a community known for its willingness to help those in need by giving both time and money to worthy causes. This was recognized in January 2010 when the City of Savannah was awarded a \$200,000 *Cities of Service Leadership Grant*, over two years, to increase service and volunteerism in Savannah. The City of Savannah is a member of the Cities of Service coalition started by New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in September 2009 with 17 initial member cities.

The grant allowed Savannah to hire Dr. Connie Cooper as Savannah’s first-ever Chief Service Officer. Dr. Cooper worked with community members, service experts, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to develop our citywide plan to increase volunteerism and target volunteers to address the city’s greatest needs. The two needs we will focus on this year are (1) increasing reading proficiency by the end of third grade at the Spencer Elementary School, a Title 1 school, and (2) the Neighborhood Renaissance Savannah Initiative. Through a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Coastal Empire, volunteers will focus on tutoring and mentoring 2nd grade students at Spencer, with the goal of helping every child read well by the end of third grade. The Neighborhood Renaissance Initiative grew out of concern that several of Savannah’s older inner-city neighborhoods were in a downward spiral. Seventeen neighborhoods have been identified by the Bureau of Public Development to become the focus of efforts to enlist neighborhood associations, businesses, and residents to become more engaged in volunteering to improve the quality of life that supports the livability and vitality in these troubled neighborhoods.

If “It takes a village to raise a child,” the village must be strong enough to do what it needs to do for the child. The increased volunteer effort in Savannah, aided by the *Cities of Service Leadership Grant* will enable us to strengthen our neighborhoods so they can aid the families and children who live in them. We have a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate how committed we are to the principle that says “We are our brother/sisters keeper” because in the final analysis “We are all in the same boat.” Through volunteering to help the least of us, we increase the chances of keeping the boat afloat. Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Otis S. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mayor



Savannah is a member of the Cities of Service coalition founded in New York City on September 10, 2009, by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and 16 other founding members. The City of Savannah is now a part of this bipartisan coalition of mayors who have answered the historic Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act's call to action. In January 2010, the City of Savannah, along with nine other cities, was a recipient of the first round of Cities of Service Leadership Grants funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. A Chief Service Officer position was created to develop and implement a citywide plan to increase volunteerism and target volunteers to address Savannah's greatest needs.

Volunteer Savannah, Savannah's comprehensive Service Plan, will increase the visibility, breadth, effectiveness and efficiency of service efforts in Savannah, with special attention to four areas identified by Mayor Johnson as priority for our city. In year one of the grant, this high-impact Service Plan will focus on Education and Neighborhood Development; year two's focus will be public health and cultural and arts education. Our Advisory Council is an integral part of the development of the Service Plan. It is comprised of a representative body of our city's agencies, institutions, and stakeholders with service as a key focus. They have participated and given direction for **Volunteer Savannah**.

In the priority area of Education, **Volunteer Savannah** will target volunteers to help reduce the achievement gap for low income children (through mentoring, tutoring, and other programs). To address the specific challenge of school readiness (literacy by 3rd grade), **Volunteer Savannah** will establish a pilot program at Spencer Elementary School – "Fit for Reading". This Initiative will provide mentoring and tutoring services to all 2nd grade students at Spencer Elementary School, during the school day. Our goals are to ensure that all 2nd graders are reading at or above grade level, and to increase the number of students who meet or exceed the reading standard on the state-mandated test. Key to school success is for children to be proficient in reading by 3rd grade. In year two, this pilot will expand to other schools.

The second priority area that **Volunteer Savannah** will focus on in year one is Neighborhood Development. The "Proud of My

Neighborhood" Initiative aims to increase citizen participation in development activities within the 17 neighborhoods of Neighborhood Renaissance Savannah. Residents who are homeowners and renters between the ages of 18-45 will be recruited for their neighborhood associations, to ensure the relevance and sustainability of the associations. Additionally, more volunteers will focus on helping to keep Savannah clean and beautiful. So much of Savannah's economic health depends on the esthetics of the city, with our neighborhood associations playing a critical role in keeping Savannah clean and vibrant.

In year two, **Volunteer Savannah** will implement Initiatives for the priority areas of cultural and arts education and public health. The Initiative for Cultural and Arts Education will be designed to strengthen citizen involvement in Savannah's museums and heritage sites and arts programs with a particular focus on bringing high school and university students into these institutions as part of their learning and service programs. The Public Health Initiative will strengthen citizen participation and leadership in achieving the objectives of the Healthy Savannah coalition, which are to increase physical exercise and access to healthy foods, especially within low-income neighborhoods.

It is not as easy as it should be for residents to connect to volunteer opportunities. **Volunteer Savannah** will work in partnership with City entities and local nonprofit organizations to develop a one-stop-shop for residents interesting in volunteering. The new website, volunteer.savannah.gov, will promote initiatives highlighted in **Volunteer Savannah** while also enabling residents to access a wide range of additional opportunities from community partners. The first phase of the site features the Service Plan and enables residents and organizations to connect with the Chief Service Officer. A second phase of the site, launching in January 2011, will enable organizations to post volunteer opportunities and residents to search and connect to opportunities.

Citizen engagement and service in Savannah is already an important feature of our city and one we will grow and strengthen. This is a grand opportunity to focus our efforts to stimulate and develop these capacities and to improve civic life in our city.



Introduction: About Cities of Service

The City of Savannah is a member of the Cities of Service coalition founded in New York City on September 10, 2009 by 17 mayors from cities around the nation. Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to lead a multi-year effort to expand impact volunteerism. The coalition has rapidly grown since its inception and now includes more than 100 mayors, representing more than 47 million Americans across the nation.

American cities face serious challenges and many mayors want to take advantage of every resource available to them – including the time and energy of public-spirited residents — to address those challenges. But in cities across America today, citizen service is often an underutilized or inefficiently utilized strategy by municipal governments. Cities of Service supports mayors to leverage citizen service strategies, addressing local needs and making government more effective.

In January 2010, *Cities of Service Leadership Grants* were awarded to ten cities: Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Nashville, Newark, Omaha, Philadelphia, Sacramento, Savannah, and Seattle. Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, the grants are used to hire Chief Service Officers. A second round of grants, this time funded jointly by the Rockefeller Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies, were announced in June 2010. The recipients are: Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Chula Vista, Houston, Little Rock, Orlando, Pittsburgh, and Richmond.

Service in Our City

How we define service

Service (volunteering and community service) can be defined as “choosing to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one’s basic obligations”, or “to give time, effort and talent to a need or cause without profiting monetarily.” Service may be performed by those who dedicate a year of their lives to a national service program or those who volunteer a few hours a week. One can serve through an agency or organization, through educational service-learning opportunities, or by oneself, doing the good deeds that need to be done.

Service-Learning can be defined as a teaching method that includes service to others and is unique in that the education of students and young people is always at its core. Students are actively participating in the process of understanding, integrating, and applying knowledge from various subjects as they work to improve their communities. Research referenced in Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse shows that service-learning positively affects youth in three general areas: academic engagement and achievement, civic attitudes and behaviors, and social and personal skills. With service-learning, students:

- connect academic subjects;
- meet real community needs;
- become leaders who contribute ideas, make decisions, and solve problems;

- discover benefits for everyone involved;
- get to work with community partners; and
- develop as active members of society.

School systems as well as colleges and universities have embraced this service strategy to connect students with their communities while making learning meaningful. Youth Serve America offers educators the opportunity to lead effective service-learning programs through Global Youth Service Day and Semester of Service. In “Authentic Youth Civic Engagement,” a report by the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families, it was reported that studies consistently show that youth in civic engagement programs are more likely to graduate, adopt productive attitudes about their role in the community and avoid risky behaviors. When these same youth reach adulthood, they tend to vote, volunteer and become valuable members of the workforce. They become lifelong civic leaders.

People Volunteer To:

- Have fun.
- Give back.
- Try new things.
- Build up their resume or find job opportunities.
- Make a positive difference.
- Learn about different cultures.
- Share their knowledge and experience.
- Develop new skills.
- Network and meet new people.
- Meet a school or work requirement.
- Impress friends, family or associates.
- Feel needed or to feel good about themselves.
- Support a cause they believe in.
- Create change.
- Be altruistic.

And because they are asked.

Our city’s tradition of service

Savannah has a rich history of volunteerism. Neighborhoods, faith based organizations, social and civic groups, doctors, nurses, volunteer fire fighters, emergency disaster volunteers as well as students and teachers from public and private schools and universities have always demonstrated commitment to our community through active volunteerism. Medical and learning institutions, social services, animal and environmental organizations all need volunteers and offer a wide variety of service oriented programs.

The United Way Hands On Savannah’s volunteer center has been a clearinghouse, matching volunteers with on-going as well as event specific opportunities since the 1970’s. Hands On Savannah’s mission is to build neighborhood spirit by uniting caring citizens to address critical needs and improve our community through volunteerism. This is done through many channels, such as offering resources at no charge to non-profit & business partners through volunteer management workshops and classes, and identifying and

coordinating volunteer projects throughout the year that can be done in a day (often referred to as Sporadic Volunteering). It also recruits for long-term, ongoing or “formal” volunteer projects on behalf of the non-profit community. Today, collaborating with more than 100 programs, agencies and governmental entities, Hands On Savannah offers service projects which fit the needs of every age group. In 2009, Hands On Savannah coordinated and referred over 10,000 volunteers to service projects.

For 20 years, The Georgia Center for Nonprofits (GCN) has served as a cornerstone of support for the nonprofit community. The GCN is uniquely positioned as the leading association for nonprofits, with a full team focused on strengthening the nonprofit sector in Georgia. Its role is to identify, create, and promote the best practices in nonprofit management, working to do so with members through executive programs, nonprofit and university training workshops, consulting services, networking, policy and advocacy work, and much more. The GCN also helps philanthropic leaders with the important work of developing strategies and building strong organizations that accelerate and grow their social impact.

Savannah appreciates the value of a Corporate Volunteer Council (CVC). The United Way of the Coastal Empire is spearheading an effort to re-establish a Council in our city. CVCs, in partnership with volunteer centers and nonprofits, support businesses in the cause of workplace volunteering. More companies with employee volunteer programs mean an increased number of volunteers to address community needs; and the community is enhanced by the partnership of companies working together and with area nonprofits to address serious social problems.

The City of Savannah encourages its employees to give back to the community in many ways. As a major supporter of the United Way of The Coastal Empire, City staff not only give financially, contributing over \$250,000 in 2009, but many serve on allocation panels, as board members, and volunteer at United Way-member agencies. In addition, City employees are allowed to use their work hours to participate in volunteer programs like the Boy Scouts’ Learning for Life program.

Using service to respond to city challenges

While Savannah is a relatively small city (population 131,510 – 2000 census), it has a vibrant and extremely diverse community. The historic downtown district (2.5 sq.miles) is a federally designated National Historic Landmark, preserving many of the historic buildings and cityscape. Savannah is distinguished by its large tourism industry, the presence of the Savannah port (4th largest in the U.S.), locally-based industries such as Gulfstream and JCB, two regional hospital centers, and five major universities and colleges with a total student population of over 30,000 (Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah State University, Savannah Technical College, South University and Savannah College of Art and Design). In recent years our economy has become increasingly diversified, with the establishment of many new knowledge-based businesses. Savannah is also known for its many African-American cultural and historical institutions, and the presence of the internationally recognized Savannah Music Festival and Savannah Film Festival.

In spite of these assets, however, poverty in Savannah has remained high, with 21.8% of the population living beneath the poverty

line (as of the last census). In order to address persistent poverty, city government has undertaken several initiatives, including improvements in the identified “Renaissance Neighborhoods,” economic development programs for targeted commercial corridors, and together with other local stakeholders (the United Way, Savannah Economic Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce and others), the creation of the Step Up Poverty Reduction Initiative and Healthy Savannah Initiative. More recently, the city is looking at how the lessons of the Harlem Children’s Zone might be applied to Savannah, with the development and strengthening of programs which would reduce the achievement gap of low income students. This effort, under the lead of the Youth Futures Authority, would complement an active program, within the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System to increase student performance and graduation rates.

Like all Cities of Service, Savannah will harness the power of volunteers to address pressing local challenges.

Priority Need Areas

Citizen engagement and service in Savannah is already an important feature of our city and one we plan to grow and strengthen. We have an opportunity to focus our efforts to stimulate and develop these capacities in keeping with the Mayor and Council’s vision for our city: *“Savannah will be a safe, environmentally healthy, and economically thriving community for all of its citizens.”* Through impact volunteering, **Volunteer Savannah** will increase the visibility, breadth, effectiveness and efficiency of service efforts. It will support projects that target community needs, use best practices, and set clear outcomes and measure progress toward those goals. We will focus on four priority areas:

Education – Targeting volunteers to help reduce the achievement gap for low-income children (through mentoring, tutoring, and other programs);

Neighborhood Development – Increasing citizen participation in neighborhood development activities, with particular attention to 17 depressed neighborhoods which are the target of city investment and services (Renaissance Neighborhoods);

Cultural and Arts Education – Strengthening citizen involvement in Savannah’s museums and heritage sites and arts programs with a particular focus on bringing high school and university students into these institutions as part of their learning and service programs; and

Public Health – Strengthening citizen participation and leadership achieving the objectives of the Healthy Savannah coalition, which are to increase physical exercise and access to healthy foods, especially within low-income neighborhoods.





Specific challenges identified in the priority areas:

The Education and Neighborhood Development priority areas will be addressed in Year 1 (2010-2011); Cultural and Arts Education and Public Health will be addressed in Year 2 (2011-12).

Year 1

Education

The Savannah- Chatham County Public School District serves over 34,500 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The district operates more than 49 schools (32 elementary, 9 middle, and 9 high) and satellite facilities including Massie Heritage Interpretation Center, a preserved historic school; and Oatland Island Education Center, an environmental education complex.

Savannah has a major problem with low levels of academic achievement among its elementary, middle, and high school students. The school district's scores on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), Georgia's state-mandated test, continue to remain below the state's average. To address the problem of academic underachievement, several mentoring and academic tutoring programs have been established. Mayor Johnson believes in a collaborative approach to improving education in our city and that it will take the community working with the school system to make a difference.

The Cities of Service Advisory Council was instrumental in helping to select Spencer as a school that could benefit from this intervention. This Title 1 (school-wide) school is located in the catchment area that will be the focus of Savannah's Promise Neighborhood Strategy. Spencer is located in a high poverty inner-city area in one of the neighborhoods included in the Neighborhood Renaissance Savannah. For the school year 2008-2009, Spencer had 284 students enrolled in kindergarten through 5th grade. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the school was African American. The other 3% included 1 Hispanic student, 4 White students, and 4 students of multiple races.

Ninety nine percent of the students received free or reduced lunches. Spencer did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. In 2007-08, the Savannah Chatham County School Board initiated its own turn around program and hired a new principal and entirely new staff. Even though Spencer school has achieved AYP for the past 3 school years, the percentages of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT in Reading, remain below the school system's and state's averages.

Volunteer Savannah will lead "Fit for Reading," a new program to provide mentoring and tutoring services to all 2nd grade students at Spencer Elementary School, to ensure their academic success by 3rd grade. Our goals are to increase the reading ability of all 2nd graders to ensure that they are reading at or above grade level, and to increase the number of students who meet or exceed the reading standard on state-mandated test. We are beginning the 2010-11 school year with Spencer Elementary School as our Fit for Reading pilot and plan to expand to other elementary schools next school year. Investment in early childhood can have life-long benefits. "Ensuring that students are proficient in reading by the end of the third grade is central to a child's success in school, life-long earning potential, and ability to contribute to the nation's economy." (Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters – Annie E. Casey Foundation)

Neighborhood Development

Savannah consists of 89 distinct neighborhoods. The City interacts with neighborhood associations through its Department of Community Development and Planning. This Department targets its work to depressed neighborhoods, providing training and access to small grants to support volunteer-managed projects, and involving the associations in city and neighborhood activities related to blight eradication. The associations are also contact points for other services that are targeted to neighborhoods, including health services, job training programs and others. **Volunteer Savannah** will focus on the 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods, assessing the level of local volunteerism and identifying the range of institutions and programs working with neighborhood volunteers.

Volunteer Savannah will lead "Proud of My Neighborhood," two new initiatives to strengthen the Renaissance Neighborhoods. Volunteer Savannah will strengthen citizen participation and involvement in the neighborhoods by engaging residents (homeowners/renters) between the ages of 18-45 in their neighborhood associations, and creating two new neighborhood associations to ensure that all 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods are represented. In addition, **Volunteer Savannah** will work with volunteers on targeted neighborhood projects to keep Savannah safe and beautiful.

Year 2

Cultural and Arts Education

The City of Savannah has 20 museums and heritage sites that are open to the public. In addition, Savannah is home to an active arts community that includes two dozen well-established arts organizations. Historical landmarks just outside of Savannah's city boundaries include the historical forts Jackson and Pulaski, and the colonial Wormsloe Plantation. Nearly all of these sites depend to some extent on a volunteer service program; the problem is that too many Savannahians have little to no connection with these sites.

Volunteer Savannah will work to strengthen citizen involvement in its museums, heritage sites and arts programs. We will build on already established linkages and networks and involve the broad and diverse array of Savannah's museums, heritage sites, cultural resources, and educational institutions. In addition, we will develop strategies for ensuring the long-term sustainability of volunteer management and training programs, and strengthen linkages with university and high school level programs through service learning. As reported in "Authentic Youth Civic Engagement," studies consistently show that youth in civic engagement programs are more likely to graduate, adopt productive attitudes about their role in the community and avoid risky behaviors.

Public Health

The Healthy Savannah Coalition was established in 2007. It is a group of community-based organizations united by common objectives – to increase opportunities for Savannahians to engage in physical activity and to improve their eating habits, so that they are enjoying a

nutritious and balanced diet. The work of the coalition is supported exclusively by volunteers who donate their time to participate in the Leadership Board and in its six working committees. **Volunteer Savannah** will work with the Healthy Savannah Leadership Board to conduct a planning process to develop a vision, objectives, and plan for strengthening volunteer services, including the management and training of its volunteers.

Cross-cutting challenges:

The theme of volunteer recruitment, management, retention, and recognition runs throughout all of the priority need areas. Many smaller volunteer organizations are unaware of the existence of valuable resources at larger organizations.

Technology will be a key strategy in the overall volunteer management process, to include the use of social media and **Volunteer Savannah** website, to connect people to volunteer opportunities and information on volunteerism.

Methodology

The Cities of Service Advisory Council played a major role in helping the Chief Service Officer identify the City's priority needs and developing strategies to address those needs. The composition and expertise of the group was invaluable throughout this entire process. The Advisory Council includes agency representative from: the Youth Futures Authority, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Georgia Center for Nonprofits, Economic Opportunity Authority, the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, the City of Savannah – Cultural Arts Department, Bureau of Public Development, and



Community Planning, St. Joseph's-Candler Hospital, Savannah State University, Hands On Savannah, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Boy Scouts of America, Health Savannah Initiative, ministerial alliance representative, and the Junior League.

We identified many sources that would give us the relevant information on

volunteerism in Savannah. Hands On Savannah provided data from recent surveys, including a 2010 Volunteer Management Survey sent to 75 area nonprofits, regarding number of volunteers, volunteer opportunities, volunteer management, challenges, recruitment strategies, areas of interest in volunteering, tracking, and capacity. The school system's Council member was able to share results from schools, including students and principals from over 49 schools, regarding volunteer efforts. We also reviewed the results from the assessment tool used by United Way, in partnership with professors from Savannah Technical College and Savannah State University; a community needs assessment was conducted two years ago in which priority areas, outcomes and indicators were developed to help the non-profit community gauge their future programming.

We divided the Council into subcommittees to work on assigned tasks, to gather and review the data to see where the gaps and challenges were and to discuss how to address those gaps and challenges. We conducted focus groups with the faith-based community and a select number of neighborhood associations to gain insight into their opportunities and challenges in regard to volunteerism. The Youth Futures Authority surveyed over 30 of its partner agencies (including private, nonprofit, and business organizations) to gather specifics from them regarding their use of volunteers, volunteer management, and community need areas. The education subcommittee focused on the public school system and the universities. The Savannah State University and Armstrong Atlantic State University student volunteer coordinators (Council members) provided tallies from their assessment tools of their respective student bodies (Savannah State University's enrollment is 3,200 and Armstrong Atlantic State University's enrollment is 7,000). The public school system's Council member reflected on student surveys, volunteer results provided by the school administration, and the Jefferson Awards Public Service Service-Leaning Initiative.

It was evident that the areas of education, health, and neighborhood improvement were high on the list of many agencies as areas in need of expanded volunteer service. These themes are in line with the priority areas identified by the Mayor earlier in the grant process. It was noted that in the school system's District Accountability System, under its Strategic Goal 4: To engage Parents and Other Community Stakeholders, two of their four objectives listed to support the Goal are – 1) Engaging our Neighborhoods and Communities, and 2) Engagement through Mentoring and Tutoring.

The Advisory Council representing of all of the priority needs areas, is committed to making Savannah a city of service through efforts to strengthen the recruitment and management of volunteers, and to help create and participate in meaningful, impactful service initiatives.

Impact Service Initiatives



Education

Challenge: Too many third grade students are failing to meet standards on reading assessments. Getting to the 4th grade without learning to read proficiently puts children on the dropout track.

Initiative: Volunteer Savannah's "Fit for Reading" Initiative will recruit volunteers to tutor and mentor 2nd grade students at Spencer Elementary School during the school day by reading to them and listening to them read following the recommended instructions of the classroom teacher and the dedicated Reading Teacher. The goal is for students to increase their reading level and to demonstrate improved reading abilities and educational attainment. If successful, this pilot program will be expanded to additional elementary schools.

Overview: Volunteer Savannah's lead partner on Fit for Reading is Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Coastal Empire. Fit for Reading is a new focus for Spencer Elementary School and for the 2010-11 2nd graders. Big Brothers Big Sisters will utilize their infrastructure for recruiting, training, managing and tracking, and retaining volunteers. Volunteers will be recruited from all segments of the city's population and training will be conducted to increase the retention rate of volunteers to ensure continuity in working with the children.

"Fit for Reading" will provide a volunteer/mentor for all 2nd graders. The 2nd grade will be the target grade level in preparation for 3rd grade which is a promotion year contingent upon passing the CRCT. Volunteers will read to 2nd graders, listen to 2nd graders read, and encourage 2nd graders to actively participate in wholesome extracurricular activities. Volunteers will be expected to commit to a minimum of 1 ½ hours per week for a total of 6 hours per month. A dedicated Reading Teacher will instruct the volunteers on how best to tutor the students for consistency and follow through back in the classroom with the regular teacher.

This Initiative is a pilot for the 2010-11 school year and will continue with the 2011-12 school year as we follow the 2nd graders to 3rd grade. Volunteer Savannah along with our Advisory Council will be considering other elementary schools as we look toward expanding this effort for the 2011-12 school year.

Neighborhood Development

Challenge: Residents between the ages of 18-45 are under-represented in neighborhood associations, threatening the sustainability of the associations. In addition, two of Savannah's 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods do not have neighborhood associations.

Initiative: The "Proud of My Neighborhood" initiative will recruit neighborhood residents who are homeowners and renters, between the ages of 18-45, to become engaged in their neighborhood associations to ensure relevance and sustainability of these associations. The problem is that most of the volunteers active in these associations are older residents who do not reflect the diversity of the neighborhoods. Savannah has a strong interest in keeping these neighborhood associations vibrant and active which is in keeping with the mission of these formal associations – to ensure as high quality of life in the City. These associations work directly with the City to address issues of crime, street and property maintenance, urban blight, and the development and maintenance of green spaces.

Challenge: So much of Savannah's economic health depends on the esthetics of the city. Volunteer engagement in keeping Savannah beautiful is spotty at best, and not organized or focused as well as it could be.

Initiative: The "Proud of My Neighborhood" Initiative will also engage more volunteers in helping to keep Savannah beautiful. So much of Savannah's economic health depends on the esthetics of the city, with our neighborhood associations playing a critical role in keeping Savannah clean and vibrant. We have an interest in focusing volunteer activity – through partnerships with our colleges and universities, middle and high schools, the faith-based community, and our business community – on long-term and sustained projects to keep Savannah clean and beautiful.





In each of the 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods, we will engage 5 to 10 new residents between the ages of 18-45 for a total of 105 new association members. For those neighborhoods with less than 1000 residents between the ages of 18-45, a minimum of five (5) will be recruited. For those neighborhoods with more than 1000 residents between the ages of 18-45, a minimum of 10 will be recruited. Our goal is to recruit 100 residents in this age group who are homeowners as well as renters who are interested in improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods, people with computer database management skills, marketing, accounting, architectural and carpenter skills, and the desire to serve.

To strengthen the connection between neighborhood associations and the City, neighborhood association members will be encouraged to enroll in the City of Savannah's Citizen's Academy. The Academy, offered by the City's Public Information Office, is a 10-week program that provides Savannah residents with a detailed behind the scenes view of city services and policies through department presentations and tours.

Neighborhood residents, alongside many other community volunteers, will have the opportunity to participate in improvement activities in their neighborhoods. The residents and members of the neighborhood associations have already identified some volunteer projects such as building passive parks and planting community gardens; creating Neighborhood Watch patrols; removing derelict vehicles; and cleaning up debris, graffiti, and other eyesores to enhance their neighborhoods and keep Savannah clean and beautiful. We expect more impact volunteer projects to flow out of this initiative in year 2.

Infrastructure Initiatives

Challenge:

It is not as easy as it should be for residents to connect to volunteer opportunities.

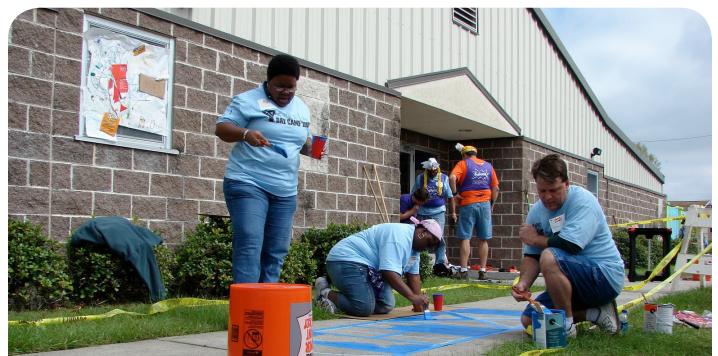
Initiative: Volunteer Savannah will work in partnership with City entities and local nonprofit organizations to develop a one-stop-shop for residents interesting in volunteering. The new website,

volunteer.savannah.gov, will promote initiatives highlighted in Volunteer Savannah while also enabling residents to access a wide range of additional opportunities from community partners. The first phase of the site features the service plan and enables residents and organizations to connect with the Chief Service Officer. A second phase of the site, launching in January, will enable organizations to post volunteer opportunities and residents to search and connect to opportunities.

Challenge:

Nonprofit organizations need additional support to train and manage volunteers.

Initiative: Volunteer Savannah will partner with the Georgia Center for Nonprofits (GCN) to provide training for all volunteers engaged in the priority initiatives. The training will provide structure and leadership development for the neighborhood association volunteers. For example, basic training in how to conduct meetings will be a part of the training; association members will have an opportunity to make suggestion for helpful training specific to their needs as well. In addition, GCN will collaborate with Big Brothers Big Sisters to provide any additional assistance in the training of Fit for Reading volunteers. We will provide a link to GCN on our website and drive traffic there for smaller agencies who are struggling with volunteer management. When we roll out the Initiatives for Year 2, GCN will be included in the training process for volunteers with those Initiatives. Hands On Savannah's resources will be used in the volunteer management process as well.



Savannah Service Plan Metrics

Priority Areas	Impact Service Initiative	Baseline	Impact Metric
Education: Fit for Reading	Volunteers will serve as mentors and tutors for 2 nd graders at Spencer Elementary School	In 2007, 66% of 2 nd graders met/exceeded standard on the CRCT in Reading; by 2010, the % increased to 77% still below the District at 89% and Georgia at 91%	By June 2011, 90% of 2 nd graders will meet or exceed the Reading standard on the CRCT; 90% will be reading at or above grade level; # of students who increase their reading level by 30%;
Neighborhood Development: Proud of My Neighborhood	18-45 year olds will engage with their neighborhood associations to ensure their sustainability and relevance; Georgia Center for Nonprofits will provide leadership training for association members	Focus is in the 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods, 15 of which have formal associations. Baseline for # of members between the ages of 18-45 is Zero	Create 2 new neighborhood associations; # of residents between the ages of 18-45 participating on a regular basis with their neighborhood associations; # of residents who take advantage of leadership training opportunities
Neighborhood Development: Proud of My Neighborhood	Focus volunteer activity in 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods	Baseline for # of Neighborhood Watch programs is 3; baseline for # of vacant lots turned into community spaces is Zero; baseline for # of new volunteer projects is Zero	Organize 14 new Neighborhood Watch programs; # of vacant lots turned into community gardens or other positive spaces; # of new volunteer projects, all focused in the Renaissance Neighborhoods
Cross Cutting	Infrastructure Initiative		Metric
	Utilize website designed through Cities of Service to enhance volunteerism in Savannah		Website hits
	Leadership training for neighborhood association members, and volunteers in any of the other Initiatives		# of volunteers who participate in training sessions designed by Georgia Center for Nonprofits

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Armstrong Atlantic State University

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Coastal Empire, Incorporated

City of Savannah

Coastal Empire Council, Boy Scouts of America

Coastal Health District

Economic Opportunity Authority, Incorporated

Georgia Center for Nonprofits

Hands On Savannah

Healthy Savannah Coalition

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance

Junior League of Savannah

Neighborhood Renaissance Savannah Captains and Teams

Savannah Chapter – The Links, Incorporated

Savannah State University

Savannah/Chatham County CASA

Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education

Smiles are Meaningful

Spencer Elementary School Principal and Staff

South University

St. Joseph's/Candler Hospital, Incorporated

The Corporation for National and Community Service

(AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps Programs)

United Way of the Coastal Empire, Incorporated

West Broad Street YMCA

Youth Futures Authority, Incorporated

Initiative Summary/Action Plan					
Priority Areas	Impact Service Initiative	Baseline	Impact Metric	Managing Partner	Timeline
Education: Fit for Reading	Volunteers will serve as mentors and tutors for 2 nd graders at Spencer Elementary School	In 2007, 66% of 2 nd graders met/exceeded standard on the CRCT in Reading; by 2010, the % increased to 77% still below the District at 89% and Georgia at 91%	By June 2011, 90% of 2 nd graders will meet or exceed the Reading standard on the CRCT; 90% will be reading at or above grade level; # of students who increase their reading level by 30%;	Big Brothers Big Sisters	October 2010 - 2012
Neighborhood Development: Proud of My Neighborhood	18-45 year olds will engage with their neighborhood associations to ensure their sustainability and relevance; Georgia Center for Nonprofits will provide leadership training for association members	Focus is in the 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods, 15 of which have formal associations. Baseline for # of members between the ages of 18-45 is Zero	Create 2 new neighborhood associations; # of residents between the ages of 18-45 participating on a regular basis with their neighborhood associations; # of residents who take advantage of leadership training opportunities	Bureau of Public Development City of Savannah	September 2010 - 2012
Neighborhood Development: Proud of My Neighborhood	Focus volunteer activity in 17 Renaissance Neighborhoods	Baseline for # of Neighborhood Watch programs is 3; baseline for # of vacant lots turned into community spaces is Zero; baseline for # of new volunteer projects is Zero	Organize 14 new Neighborhood Watch programs; # of vacant lots turned into community gardens or other positive spaces; # of new volunteer projects, all focused in the Renaissance Neighborhoods	Bureau of Public Development City of Savannah	September 2010 - 2012
Cross Cutting	Infrastructure Initiative		Metric		
	Utilize website designed through Cities of Service to enhance volunteerism in Savannah		Website hits	Chief Service Officer	September 2010 – On-going
	Leadership training for neighborhood association members, and volunteers in any of the other Initiatives		# of volunteers who participate in training sessions designed by Georgia Center for Nonprofits	Georgia Center for Nonprofits	On-going

